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Housekeeper's Chat

Thursday, August 28, 1930.

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

SUBJECT: "Questions and Answers." Information from various sources, including the Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. D. A.

--ooOoo--

I seem to have several unanswered questions in my correspondence box. I'm sure a good many of you will be interested in the first one. Especially since you may be GOING PLACES and SEEING THINGS, as the college boys say, over the Labor Day holiday, and picking up meals wherever you happen to be. This letter reads:

"Dear Aunt Sammy: When we take our garden produce to town to the market, we have to stay all day. Generally we eat lunch at a soda counter to get thru quickly, and also to get some hot tea or coffee. Can you give me some suggestions on choosing a good lunch at these quick lunch places?"

This writer evidently feels just as I do, when I get up on one of those high stools in front of a marble counter, and try to decide between ham and cheese sandwiches, or the various kinds of pies, cakes, ice cream, and soft drinks.

After long practice, I have discovered several things at quick lunch counters, that make very good meals when I'm in a hurry. You can almost always get milk in unopened half-pint bottles, put up by a reliable dairy. You will find, too, grape juice, and fruit drinks made from freshly squeezed juices. - orangeade, lemonade, and limeade. The tea and coffee are generally good, especially tea made in the cup from a tea bag.

Sandwiches, of course, have to be the backbone of most lunch-counter meals. Many places now are specializing in toasted sandwiches, made up to order with lettuce or fresh tomatoes, along with cold sliced meat, or cheese. I have also seen both fruit and potato salads on sale at drug-store counter lunches. In cool weather they have soups as well.

Lunch counters almost always have apples, oranges, grapefruit, bananas, and, in their season, cantaloupes and watermelons. With fruit for dessert, and a substantial toasted sandwich, and a cup of hot tea, or coffee, or chocolate, I make out very well.

Shall I give you some of my lunch-counter menus?

THE HISTORY OF THE
CITY OF BOSTON

FROM THE FIRST SETTLEMENT TO THE PRESENT TIME
BY SAMUEL JOHNSON

1790

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1. Tomato and lettuce sandwich on brown bread, coffee, watermelon.
2. Vegetable soup, toasted cheese sandwich, tea, cup cake.
3. Egg salad sandwich, milk, fruit turnover.
4. Tomato soup, ham sandwich, cantaloupe with vanilla ice cream.
5. Toasted chicken sandwich, orangeade, ginger cake.

Billy asked me a question the other day which might be answered right here.

"What should I do with my spoon when I drink soda? Leave it in the glass or take it out?"

Customs may differ in different places, but commonsense suggests that a long-handled spoon in a tall glass is very much in the way when drinking. Billy hasn't had coffee and tea on his menu yet, or he would know the spoon is NEVER, NEVER, left in one's cup, even for a minute. It is used for stirring, then laid in the saucer. Unfortunately, Billy doesn't find a saucer under his soda glass, so I'm afraid he will have to put the spoon on the counter.

I must get on with my other question. Here's one about cleaning silver. Can tarnish be removed from silver without rubbing?

Yes. Tarnish on silver can be removed ^{by} the ELECTROLYTIC method. Various commercial devices for this can be bought, for use at home, or it can be done in the following way: Fill an enameled or agateware kettle, partly full of water. In it dissolve 1 teaspoon of either washing soda or baking soda and 1 teaspoon salt, to each quart of water. Heat this solution to the boiling point, put in strips of aluminum or bright zinc, add the tarnished silver, and boil it. The silver must be covered completely by the water, and each piece must be in contact with the aluminum or zinc, either directly or thru other silver. When the tarnish has disappeared, the silver should be removed from the kettle, washed and dried with a clean, soft cloth.

So much for cleaning silver. I might add, though, that to MY way of thinking there is nothing quite equal to RUBBING SILVER BRIGHT, with good polish, and a soft chamois.

The next question came by telephone this morning. When I broadcast the menu yesterday, with chocolate custard for the children's dessert, I had a hunch my telephone would ring. Sure enough, it did this morning, before breakfast was over.

"How do you make Chocolate Custard, Aunt Sammy?", asked a cheery voice. "I haven't any children. In fact, I've only been married a month. My husband though, loves chocolate desserts, and I want to surprise him at dinner today. So, please, Aunt Sammy, can't you give me the recipe for CHOCOLATE CUSTARD?"

Of course I gave it to her, and perhaps you'd like to have it too. It isn't in the radio cook book, or in the egg leaflet.

Ready to take down Chocolate Custard? Six ingredients:

2 squares unsweetened chocolate	1/2 teaspoon salt
1 quart milk	4 eggs, and
3/4 cup sugar	1/2 teaspoon vanilla

Again six ingredients for Chocolate Custard. Repeat.

Melt the chocolate in a double boiler, add the milk, sugar, and salt. While they are heating, beat the eggs slightly. Pour some of the hot mixture into the eggs. Mix well, add to the other ingredients in the double boiler, and stir constantly until thickened. When cool, stir in the vanilla, and chill thoroughly. Serve plain or with whipped cream over the top. If left overnight, the custard becomes thicker.

My last question will have to be saved until tomorrow. It's about borrowing from neighbors, and I am almost afraid to risk a personal opinion. Guess I'll ask my radio listeners to answer this one!

--ooOoo--

FRIDAY: Dinner for an Autumn Sunday.

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1. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 1990; 263: 2761-2765.